



Rockville News

2016 City Council

Mayor

Jeff Hagen 320-266-0377

Councilors:

Susan Palmer 320-267-2966

Don Simon 320-250-9674

Rick Tallman 320-266-4856

Duane Willenbring 320-293-8732

December 2016

1st ROCORI Trail	9:00 a.m.
4th Santa Day—Fire Hall	11:00 a.m.
13th Planning Commission	6:00 p.m.
21st City Council	6:00 p.m.
26th Christmas	Closed

January 2017

2nd Happy New Year	Closed
5th ROCORI Trail	9:00 a.m.
10th Planning Commission	6:00 p.m.
16th Martin Luther King	Closed
18th City Council	6:00 p.m.
26th Utility Bill Due	

February 2017

7th ROCORI Trail	9:00
14th Planning Commission	6:00
15th City Council	6:00
20th President's Day	Closed

Happy Holidays!

Letter from the Mayor

Greetings. While I fully understand that not all of us share the same ideology, I am very pleased with the results of our recent national election and I hope we all can at least agree that the country will likely move in a new direction from that of the past 8 years (and much longer); certainly time to try something different.

In one more month I will be done with my 8th and final year as your mayor. There have been several other years as councilor and Planning Commission member, therefore in total, I have spent more than enough time in city politics. I strongly encourage others to volunteer their time to participate because I feel that until you do, you will not fully understand the challenges these positions can present.

I would like to comment on our most recent council meeting where we had an extremely large turnout primarily due to several road improvement projects that your council had unanimously approved to move forward for bonding and of course, public hearing for citizen input. After many years of citizen concerns over the condition of our roads, years of discussion by council as to when and how to proceed with maintenance, repair and replacement, along with our engineer's recommendations, the council agreed it was time to begin tackling the dis-repair to some of the city's 25-mile +/- roads. I was surprised by the level of criticism the council received regarding this plan.

Comments from the public included how poorly the council has planned/budgeted for road work, how poorly the council has communicated/listened to its citizens, how terrible the tax increases have been, etc. I was most surprised by the comments regarding tax increases and in response, here is a summary of what our tax levies have been the past 8 years; and the increase (or decrease) year over year:

2016 budgeted for 2017:	\$1,214,000	7.5%
2015 collected in 2016:	\$1,129,000	1.9%
2014 collected in 2015:	\$1,107,000	4.0%
2013 collected in 2014:	\$1,064,000	0.0%
2012 collected in 2013:	\$1,064,000	5.8%
2011 collected in 2012:	\$1,005,000	1.1%
2010 collected in 2011:	\$ 994,000	(5.6%)
2009 collected in 2010:	\$1,052,000	NA

We removed all but 2 road projects from the larger proposed list for 2017 using mostly reserves built up to cover their cost; and even with this materially largest increase in tax levy over the past 8 years, ...continued page 2

Would you like to get in the Christmas Spirit?

The **Rockville Lions Club** is sponsoring a **Holiday Gift Program**.

If you would like to help support our community, donations would be appreciated.

The program is in need of toys, hats, mittens or cash. Items can be dropped off at Rockville City Hall, The Granite Edge Cafe, or the Parish Center at church.

Checks may be written out and mailed to:
Rockville Lions, P.O. Box 406, Rockville MN 56369.

If you would like to sponsor a child or a family or have any questions please contact Rosie @ 320-252-6473.

All donations will stay in our local area.

Thank you!
The Rockville Lions



Safe Winter Shoveling Tips

1. Don't shovel snow if you're not physically fit.
2. Warm your muscles with a few stretches before you shovel.
3. Lighten the load with a shovel that is about elbow height.
4. Don't race. Slow and steady shoveling produces less strain.
5. Turn your feet to the direction you're lifting or throwing.
6. Take a ten minute water break about every 15 minutes.

New Water Meters



As of this past summer all homes and businesses in the Rockville area with city water services have new water meters. These new meters allow for remote access to read your meters.

If you have an old water meter box on the outside of your home it can be removed. If in doubt about an existing box, feel free to contact City Hall to confirm.

Utility Bill Payment Due Date:

Please note that your utility bill is due by the end of business on the due date listed on your bill. Any payments received in the mail or drop box after the due date will incur a late fee.

NOW AVAILABLE - Utility Bill Direct Payment

Did you know that you can now pay your utility bill from your checking or savings account automatically - no checks to write, stamps to buy, or late payments! Automatic pay is an efficient, hassle-free way to pay your City of Rockville utility bill. Payments are deducted directly from your checking or savings account on each billing due date. There is *no charge* for this service.

FREE! To sign up for automatic pay, please submit a completed **Automatic Payment Plan Authorization Form** (found on our website or by calling City Hall) along with your current utility bill payment to City Hall. You will know your enrollment is complete when you see the words, 'DO NOT PAY – AUTOMATIC WITHDRAWAL ON DUE DATE' on your bill statement. Automatic pay can be cancelled at any time by notifying the city in writing that you wish to discontinue this service.

Please include a voided check or a savings deposit/withdrawal slip along with your application.

For any questions, please contact City Hall at 320-251-5836 or email us at cityhall@rockvillecity.org.

Winter Parking During Snow Emergencies

Ordinance No. 2012-75

AN ORDINANCE REGULATING PARKING DURING SNOW EMERGENCIES ON ALL CITY STREETS DURING WINTER MONTHS

71.04 (A) On the occasions of heavy snowfalls, the Public Works Director shall determine when to commence and/or suspend snow plowing operations.

71.04 (B) When snow has accumulated to a depth greater than 1 ½" inches, a "NO PARKING BAN" will be in effect over the entire city. It shall be the responsibility of the duty police officer (Stearns County Sheriff) to cite and/or tow all violators. After the streets are plowed, parking will be permitted.

71.04 (C) Violators of this ordinance will be subject to a \$25.00 penalty and in the event that it is necessary that a vehicle be towed away, the cost of the towing, the penalty, and any other related charges will be at the expense of the vehicle owner and will be collected in full before any vehicle is released.

71.04 (D) This ordinance repeals and supersedes all previous snow removal ordinances relating to the removal of snow on public streets in the City of Rockville.

Coming soon!
Community Ice Rink
OPEN this season
(weather permitting)

Located at the Community Park
(on the corner of Othmar Lane and
Chestnut Street South)

Grab your skates and
check it out!



Would you like your newsletter emailed to you?
We can do that!
Email us at cityhall@rockvillecity.org to sign up.



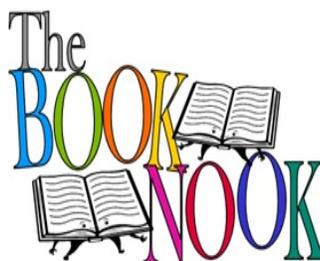
Reminder Homeowners

Homeowners if you are considering a new roof, siding, deck/patio, or even a new addition— don't forget your building permit.

Stop by City Hall to pick up your permit or check out our city website for applications:

www.rockvillecity.org

If you have questions please don't hesitate to call
City Hall: 320-251-5836



Did you know there is a **book nook** at City Hall? It's a book sharing opportunity for those who love to read! No due dates and no late fees—how nice is that! We have lots of jigsaw puzzles too. Be sure to stop by and take a peek!

Open Monday through Friday—8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



LONG TERM WINTER CARE FOR RESIDENTS WITH GRINDER STATIONS



Long term or winter lay-up does not adversely affect your grinder station. However, a few routine steps that you should take to prevent maintenance problems upon your return. The following is a simple list of steps to take before seasonal or other long term absences:

- Ensure that nothing is blocking the airflow around the bottom of the cover
- Before closing your home for an extended period of time (one week or longer), run clean water out of a faucet into your grinder station for approximately 30 minutes. This will thoroughly flush the line from your grinder station to the main line. Failure to flush the line can result in build up in the line which could result in a future expense to the homeowner.
- Do NOT turn off the power to the grinder station at the panel. If you normally turn off the main power to shut everything down, turn off all of the other individual circuits EXCEPT the grinder station.
- Let a trusted neighbor know you are leaving so they will be aware of any red lights or alarms in your absence.

If you have any winterizing questions or concerns, please call the maintenance department at 320-251-5836.

Care of Your Grinder Station

With proper care and following a few simple guidelines your grinder pump will give you many years of dependable service.

USE AND CARE:

The UltraGRIND grinder pump station is designed to handle routine, domestic sewage. Solid waste materials should be thrown in the trash. While your station is capable of accepting and pumping a wide range of materials, regulatory agencies advise that the following items should **not** be introduced into any sewer either directly or through a kitchen waste disposal:

- Glass
- Metal
- Diapers
- Socks, Rags, or Cloth
- Plastic Objects (e.g. toys, utensils, etc.)
- Sanitary Napkins or Tampons

If these items are found in the grinder pump, the City has the right to charge you for repairs.

In addition you must **NEVER** introduce into any sewer:

- Explosives
- Flammable Material
- Lubricating Oil and/or Grease
- Strong Chemicals
- Gasoline
- Cooking Oil

The sewer control panel has a red light indicator and an alarm, if yours or your neighbor's *red light/alarm* is going off it is indicating a problem, **please notify the City Sewer Department anytime at 320-293-5111**. If no answer, please leave a message stating the address of the grinder station and your return phone number.

Snow Removal Around Fire Hydrants

During the winter season residents are asked to keep fire hydrants free from obstruction of snow.

As you shovel or push snow off your driveways and sidewalks, take time to clear the snow from around fire hydrants (three-foot radius).

During a fire, seconds counts. Help keep your home safe from winter fire hazards by ensuring your fire hydrants are clear and readily accessible in an emergency.



Curb Marking Posts Help Snow Plows

To help out the City snow plow crews this winter, the City is recommending that property owners mark their property lines along roadways with curb marker posts. This will help snow plow drivers plow to the end of your property when snow leaves no indication of where your property and the street meet. You can purchase these markers at any local hardware store. Residents are reminded that the City is not responsible for damage that may be done from snowplows including damage to sprinkler heads.

Keep in mind — *Plowing or shoveling snow from driveways and sidewalks onto/across public roads and streets may be punishable as a misdemeanor (Minn. Statutes 169.42 and 160.27, subdivision 5). This can create a real hazard not only for motorists but for snowplows and snow plow drivers as well.*

Safety First

Your help is needed for safe and effective snow removal. Please help snow removal crews by following these simple do's and don't's

Do

- Learn the winter parking regulations and act accordingly.
- Follow the weather forecast and drive according to conditions.
- Give snowplow drivers room to work safely.
- Be patient—plowing and salting take time.

Don't

- Throw snow from your driveway onto the street or sidewalk.
- Park your vehicle on the street after a snowfall until the street is plowed from curb to curb.
- Place garbage or recycling containers in the street.
- Allow children to build snow forts near the road.

USE OF SNOWMOBILES IN THE CITY OF ROCKVILLE



Ordinance No. 2004-21. Snowmobiles should be driven on designated snowmobile trails. The snowmobile trail is clearly marked. Watch for the trail signs. Use ditch bottoms or far right hand side of street or road if necessary.

Do NOT operate your snowmobile on:

- * Sidewalks
- * Boulevards within any public right-of-way
- * Private property of another without specific permission of the owner
- * Parks (city or county—unless otherwise posted)
- * Inside slope, shoulder, or roadway of state and county roads
- * Interstate highways or freeway

For additional information on snowmobile regulations visit the Minnesota DNR's website:
www.dnr.state.mn.us/snowmobiling

Dog Owner Responsibilities

Dog owners need to be aware of their responsibilities. A copy of the City's dog ordinance (No. 2009-59) is available at City Hall or on the city's website: www.rockvillecity.org.

Rockville Lions Holiday Gift Program

The Rockville Lions are sponsoring a Holiday Gift Program. It is for families or individuals in our area who are in need of food, monetary or materialistic items. If you would like to apply please fill out an application form and return to: Rockville Lions, P.O. Box 406, Rockville, MN 56369. Applications can be found at Rockville City Hall, The Granite Edge Café, Rockville Post Office, or the church in Rockville.

All applications must be received no later the Friday, Dec. 9th.

HOLIDAY GIFT PROGRAM APPLICATION ROCKVILLE LIONS CLUB

FOR FAMILIES OR INDIVIDUALS IN NEED OF FOOD, CLOTHING,
OR OTHER MATERIALISTIC ITEMS

Head of Household: _____

Address: _____

Contact name : _____

Phone number: _____

Number of Adults: _____ Number of children: _____

**Connection to the Rockville Area? _____

	NAME	M/F	age	clothing needs and size
1.	_____	M/F	_____	_____
2.	_____	M/F	_____	_____
3.	_____	M/F	_____	_____
4.	_____	M/F	_____	_____
5.	_____	M/F	_____	_____

Mail to: Rockville Lions, PO Box 406, Rockville MN 56369

All applications will be considered. Information given may be shared with other agencies to help with your needs. A photo I.D. must be shown at distribution time. Applications must be received by December 9, 2016.

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the 2017 levy represents an increase of approximately 15% over the 2009 levy. That is an average of approximately 1.9%/year. The consumer price index was 214.537 for 2009 and through September of 2016, it is 241.729; an increase of approximately 13%. Even with our healthy tax levy increase for 2017, we have barely surpassed this measure of the cost of living.

There was about \$3.2 million in road reconstruction projects in the council's initial proposal and that could be paid for with a 10-year bond at an annual cost of approximately \$235,000. This would have taken care of a good portion of our needed road replacement, while also reducing future maintenance costs on these roads. The City should probably be doing about an average of \$1.0 million each year in road replacement, repairs and maintenance, but if we just budget for that in general tax revenues with a \$250,000 increase, that would mean we could do one \$1.0 million road project every 4 years. Roads do not deteriorate at a perfectly gradual rate; after a certain point, there's a steep drop-off in condition. Fixing a road before that cliff can be the difference between low-cost minor maintenance and pricy major reconstruction. For those citizens that feel we should budget for road work in general tax revenues and not bond or assess, depending on how frequent you want to make a \$1.0 million reconstruction, if at every 4 years, a \$250,000 tax increase is about a 22% increase over 2016 tax levy.

A related issue raised at this meeting was whether to assess for road projects and our current policy is 27%, having been reduced from a more typical 30% years ago as a result of citizen complaints regarding assessing on a core city road project (at least to the best of my recollection). Whether to assess or budget for road projects, I am only moderately in favor of assessing. The only reason I prefer assessing is because it helps somewhat in managing citizen's demands for road replacement when they know there is a direct cost to them for the benefit of having a new road. It is my opinion more citizens will demand new road surfaces, want to be moved to the top of the priority list, if there is no additional direct cost to them.

Some cities have gone to turning paved roads into gravel roads. A paved road has less annual maintenance expenses than gravel roads, but when including the capital costs of a paved road, over the life of a paved road, the paved road has a higher annual cost. There are also the issues of wear and tear on cars and their tires, and road safety; safety being the most difficult to place a \$ figure on. Most people choose to pave their driveways and parking areas, so it is my opinion that most citizens would prefer to drive on paved roads. I don't think it is fair to point to other roads that you don't often drive and say they should be turned to gravel rather than repaired, but at the same time, traffic counts, budgeting and assessing issues can help cities in making decisions for those roads.

A couple comments regarding recent local election and the direction of the management of the city. The League of Minnesota Cities states:

"Councilmembers' statutory duties are to be performed, almost without exception, by the council as a whole. For example, the council, not individual members, must supervise administrative officers, formulate policies, and exercise city powers."

"Councilmembers should devote their official time to problems of basic policy and act as liaisons between the city and the general public."

"As individuals, council members have no administrative authority. They cannot give orders or otherwise supervise city employees unless specifically directed to do so by the council. The council, however, has complete authority over all administrative affairs in the city."

It is my opinion that we have experienced a much higher than necessary turnover in staff due to the failure of some councilors in following the above guidelines and at the same time, allowing some citizens to carry out their individual desires through them. There are several management styles, but clearly the League has some strong guidelines on the roles of councilors and mayors. It is my opinion that good management includes hiring very good people, establish good policies, and let those people do their jobs. It is my opinion that we currently have an excellent staff, among the best in the state, and if they continue to be criticized, dis-respected, micro-managed, etc. these good employees will find employers that recognize and respect their abilities; and Rockville will lose as a result.

Have a great holiday season and New Year.

Jeff Hagen



A Gift of Remembrance

Have you considered giving the gift that will honor someone forever?
Applications are being accepted for names to be added to the
Rockville Veterans Monument and are
available at City Hall or the city's website at: www.rockvillecity.org

